**Inaccurate journalism by Sligo Weekender**

Eastern Harps GAA Club was inexplicably referred to as a club which "should be banned from future underage football" in an article of very disappointing journalism by the Sligo Weekender on December 29th, 2016, entitled “Good, bad and…..very ugly”. The article, among other things, was referring to incidents which happened after an U16 boys match between Shamrock Gaels and Eastern Harps in Shamrock Gaels Park, Coola on 29th August 2016.  It will become clear, as you read on, that Eastern Harps players, coaches or supporters were not responsible in any way for the incidents which occurred on the evening.

On 16th January 2017, our Secretary wrote to the Editor of the Sligo Weekender to ask him to either clarify these remarks or issue an apology to the club in a future edition.

The Sligo Weekender failed to respond in any way to our correspondence for a full month.  The response, when it did arrive, left a lot to be desired.  Notably, they failed to apologise for their unjustified attack on our club and merely stated that they had been asked to point out that the article was inaccurate.  Also, the Sligo Weekender has neither acknowledged nor replied directly to the email sent by our club Secretary.

We, as a club, are very disappointed that the Sligo Weekender could not acknowledge their error and apologise for the inaccuracy of their journalism.  When you read the sequence of correspondence below, you can make up your own mind as to whether the Sligo Weekender has done enough to rectify the wrong which was inflicted on our club.

Outlined below in order is:

1. Email from our Club Secretary to the Sligo Weekender on 16th January 2017 (page 2).
2. Extract of email received from Seosamh Ó Murchu, Sligo Co. Board, on 13/02/2017, following completion of its investigation into the incidents which occurred at Shamrock Gaels Park (page 3).
3. Clarification which appeared in Sligo Weekender on Thursday, 16/02/2017 (page 3).

**1. Email from Club Secretary to Robert Cullen (Editor, Sligo Weekender) and Liam Maloney (Sports Editor, Sligo Weekender) on 16th January, following remarks made about our club in the Sligo Weekender, dated 29th December 2016:**

From: Secretary EasternHarps Sligo
Sent: 16 January 2017 19:28
To: robertcullen@sligoweekender.com
Cc: liam.maloney@sligoweekender.ie; Padraig Henry; Secretary Sligo
Subject: Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I refer to an article in the Sligo Weekender, dated 29th December 2016, entitled "Good, bad and.....very ugly".

In this article, Eastern Harps GAA Club is one of three clubs referred to where incidents had occurred at underage matches during the year.   Without stating what exactly what is being alleged against our club, it is stated in the article that "a strong County Board would have banned these clubs from future underage competitions".

Can you, or the author, Mr. Liam Maloney, please explain in an article in your newspaper the exact reason why Eastern Harps GAA Club should be banned from future underage competitions.  If such a defamatory remark about our club cannot be justified, which I am confident will be the case, I ask that you to publish an apology to Eastern Harps GAA Club in your newspaper without delay, referring specifically to the fact that there was no basis whatsoever to the statement in your article that our club "should be banned from future underage competitions".

I await your response.

Mise le meas
Seán Ó Dorraidhín
Rúnaí

**2.**      **Extract of email received from Seosamh Ó Murchu, Sligo Co. Board, following completion of its investigation into the incidents which occurred at Shamrock Gaels Park (relevant text concerning Eastern Harps below).**

YouthOfficer Sligo

Mon 13/02/2017 22:02

To:

Secretary EasternHarps Sligo

A chara,

The Eastern Harps club and officials were not held responsible for the incidents which took place after the U.16 match between Shamrock Gaels and Eastern Harps and thus no sanction was placed on the club or officials by the C.C.C.

……..

Mise le meas,

Seosamh O Murchu

1. **Clarification which appeared in Sligo Weekender on Thursday, 16/02/2017:**

“With reference to the article published in the issue of December 29, 2016, entitled Good, Bad and…..very ugly, we have been asked to point out, and are happy to do so, that neither Eastern Harps GAA Club nor any member of that club are under investigation or face possible Sligo GAA sanctions on foot of alleged incidents at an U-16 Gaelic football fixture between themselves and Shamrock Gaels”.